

Return to School Plan

FALL 2020

Millhopper Montessori School
8505 NW 39th Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32606
(352) 375-6773
Millhopper.com mmschool@millhopper.com



**MILLHOPPER
MONTESSORI
SCHOOL**



Return to School Plan

FALL 2020

Millhopper Montessori's family of parents, teachers, and students is preparing for a school year that will feel flexible and adaptive to the well-being of everyone. Regardless of all the changes that the past year has created, we are striving to keep MMS a welcome oasis for your family and a safe and secure school for your children. Our school's community is the perfect size to create a safe and stimulating learning environment for your child, and every child, every day.

We have missed the face to face contact with your children and are so excited to be opening the campus for all who are able to return in person. We will connect with those who are not ready to return through the technology we are fortunate to have in place, until the time they are ready to join their teachers and friends in person.

Per CDC guidelines, the recommendations contained in our Return to School Plan will be a working document constantly reviewed to ensure best practice is utilized to prioritize the safety and well being of our MMS community.

Specific details regarding staggered pick up/drop off times, morning and after school programs, etc., will be available in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your support and belief in The Millhopper Way.

Sincerely,

Christina Miller

Educational Plans

Protecting the health, safety, and well-being of every member of the MMS community is our highest priority. MMS is using scenario-based planning to prepare for 2020-2021, which means we are making concurrent plans for multiple operating models for the upcoming school year. Please note, we have four plans.

We recognize the needs of young children include the requirement of supervision and care in addition to their learning. In the event campus operations must be modified, we will prioritize continuing to offer on-campus instruction for our youngest students, if possible.

Preschool-aged students are allowed to remain on campus daily for in-person learning, even if external circumstances dictate our Kindergarten, Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School must return to *Remote Learning (A state mandate for K-12).

In-Person Plan:

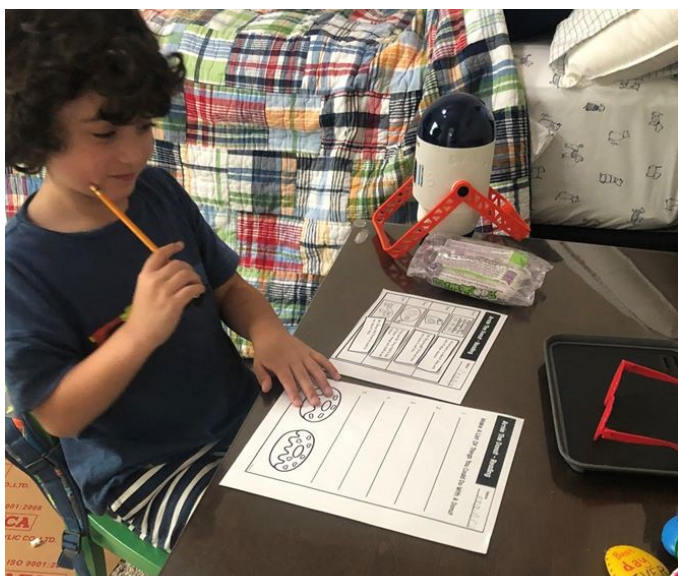
Per the education commissioner's executive order for schools reopening in fall, we are planning an in-person start to the school year on Monday, August 17th. Operating under the In-Person Plan is our preference for the entire 2020-2021 school year, and we are preparing ourselves, our campus, and our operations for this possibility.

The In-Person Plan means students will attend classes on-campus, full-time, with enhanced precautions, such as increased cleaning, modified classroom layouts, staggered arrival and dismissal schedules, social distancing, and daily student health screening and temperature checks.



Adaptable Plan:

Concurrent with the In-Person Plan, we will also offer an Adaptable Plan. This plan is for students who are required to go home for sickness or to self-quarantine per guidelines set forth by the Florida Department of Health. It is also available for families who remain fully enrolled but prefer their children to continue to learn from home, attending school virtually, until the COVID-19 virus issue changes.



This plan will mirror in-person learning as much as possible. It will use live streaming, teleconferencing, and/or video recordings of what is happening in class to keep the child connected to the classroom community, and the ability to complete assignments at home and turn in by mailing/dropping off/digital submission. *It is not a separate on-line teaching/curriculum option; it follows what is happening in the classroom and is designed to help maintain connection and community between classmates on campus and those at home.* Students and parents can expect to communicate weekly with teachers to review progress, time management, and class work expectations.

Hybrid Learning Plan:

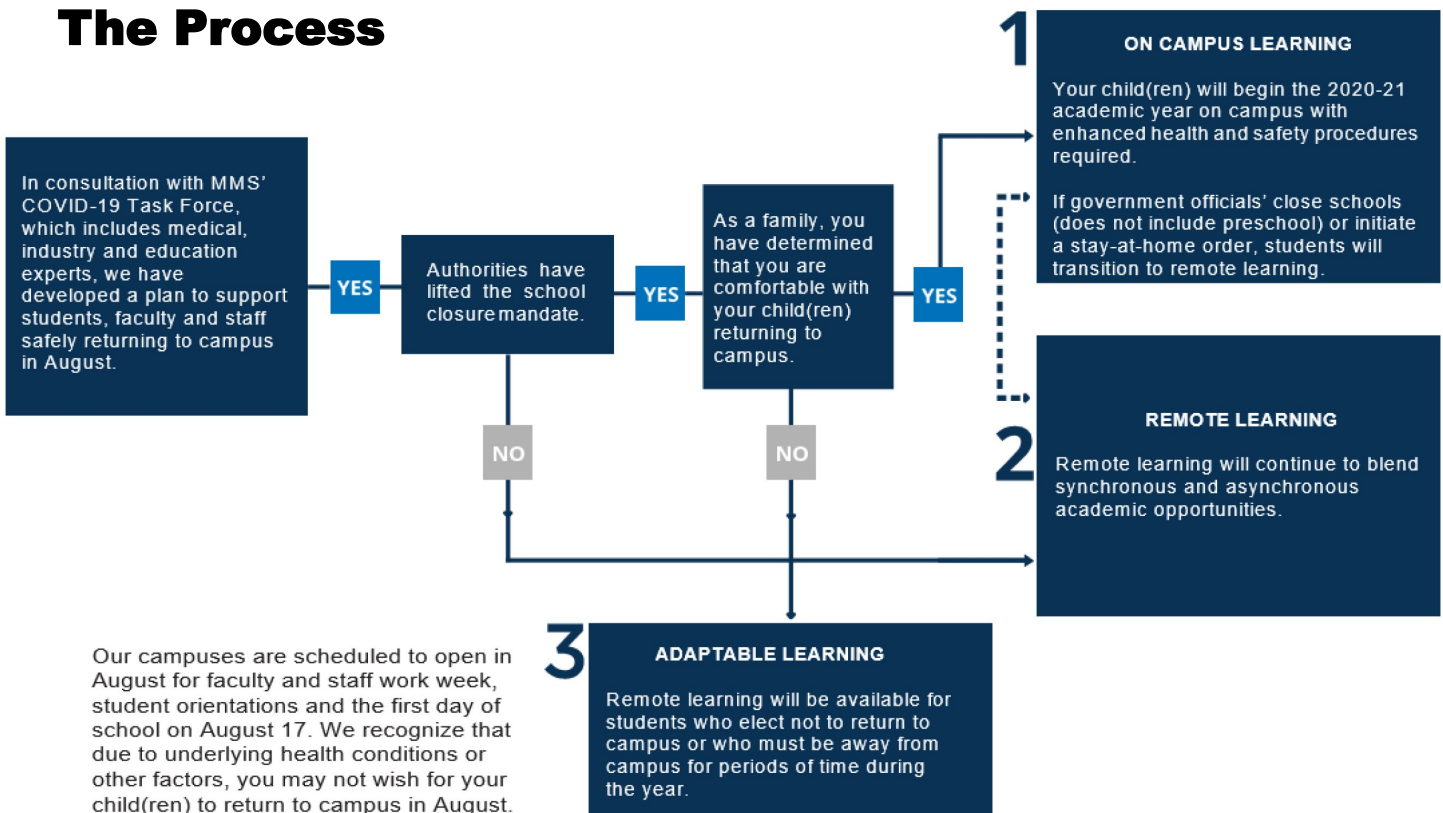
This plan may be necessary if class sizes must be further reduced, as dictated by the Alachua County Health Department or by a gubernatorial executive order. This plan will be a combination of the In-Person and Remote Learning Plans. Students will be split into two group sessions; each will alternately attend face-to-face, core instructional time on campus and engage in synchronous and asynchronous remote learning. When on-campus, students will remain in their individual class groupings and engage in small group and one-on-one lessons. When remote, students will video conference in large and small groups and complete project-based and individual work assignments.

Remote Learning Plan:

Despite our desire for sustained in-person learning, we are prepared to learn in any environment throughout the 2020-2021 school year. The Remote Learning Plan might be necessary if mandated by the Alachua County Health Department or if dictated by a gubernatorial executive order. Remote learning is designed to provide an educational alternative to in-person instruction when it is not safe to open all or part of the MMS campus. Remote learning is deployed when an entire class, division, or the school, as a whole, is involved.

During remote learning, there will be no on-campus classes. Instruction will be provided via distance learning through both synchronous and asynchronous classes. Teachers will do their best to respond to the unique needs of the digital environment when designing instruction and assignments.

The Process



Health and Safety

The safety, health, and well-being of our students, families, and faculty are always our top priority. As a school, we will follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Florida Department of Health to safely open and operate our campus.

Our current plans are based on published pre-decisional guidance from the Florida Department of Health and center around four concrete approaches: increasing social distancing, implementing hygiene controls, monitoring student and staff health, and providing education.

Families play a vital role in maintaining the health and safety of our campus. The number one safety measure is to keep your child home if s(he) or someone in the household is sick. As a community, we must understand that there are families with higher risk members in their households, and we must all do our part to adhere to state and local health recommendations and regulations to control transmission. Moreover, there may be times when we ask you to comply with broader safety measures. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and compliance.



Cloth Face Coverings and Face Masks

The best way to slow the transmission of COVID-19 in a school setting is to require all staff and students to wear face coverings throughout the day. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, or other medical personal protective equipment. MMS will follow cloth face-covering recommendations for staff and students, as appropriate and knowing expectations will vary by grade, age and needs of the child.

Current CDC recommendations for schools include:

- Recommend and reinforce the use of cloth face coverings among students, faculty, and staff.
- Face coverings should be worn as feasible and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
- Younger children (e.g., preschool or early elementary aged) may be unable to wear a cloth face covering properly, particularly for an extended period of time. Wearing of cloth face coverings may be prioritized at times when it is difficult to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others (e.g., during carpool drop off or pick up, or when standing in line at school). Ensuring proper cloth face covering size and fit and providing children with frequent reminders and education on the importance and proper wear of cloth face coverings may help address these issues.

- Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance
 - A child age 2 and under

MMS is requiring all adults and children in Lower Elementary, Upper Elementary, and Middle School to wear face coverings when inside buildings and when adequate social distancing measures cannot be maintained (for example, seated during line time or community meetings).

Facial coverings for all students will not be required when students are eating, attending PE or recess outside, or otherwise outside (such as for lessons) when social distancing is possible and appropriate.

Faculty and students may wear a clear plastic face shield instead of a face covering when a facial covering may be an impediment to learning (for example, during a phonics lesson). However, a face covering is preferable at all times. The CDC writes, regarding Face Shields, "It is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. If face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin.

MMS is strongly recommending all children in Preschool/Kindergarten, Preschool, and Beginner's follow the guidance above, but will not require children in these classes to wear facial coverings.

Daily Health Checks

Protocols for the daily health screening of staff and children for COVID-19 include:

- Before arriving each day, parents must fill out their child's health screening form which will be emailed and texted to parents each morning - students will not be allowed on campus without this form being filled out.
- Upon arrival, during your child's designated time, please line up in the drive through area (where the Safety Patrollers would typically assist). Parents and students will stay in their cars. An MMS staff member will come to the car and they will take the child's temperature via a rolled-down window. Once it is confirmed that the child does not have a temperature of 100 or above, the MMS staff member will escort your child to a hand sanitizing station and then to his/her classroom.
- When parents arrive to pick their child up during their designated time slot, an MMS staff member will radio your child's classroom and he/she will be escorted to your car.
- All staff members are required to fill out health screening forms daily and to undergo temperature checks upon arrival and dismissal.



Hygiene Protocols

MMS will implement a systematic hygiene routine, which builds upon its already strong culture of grace and courtesy, caring for oneself, caring for each other, and caring for the environment.

- Using proper technique, students will wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer on their hands upon arrival in the morning, before and after playing outside, before and after eating meals and snacks, after group lessons, after blowing noses, coughing, sneezing or when in contact with body fluids, after toileting, and after any close physical contact as needed for the health and well-being of a student.
- We will provide hand sanitizing stations for use when handwashing with soap and water is not available. Hand sanitizing products will have at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Faculty will provide age-appropriate lessons on limiting the spread of germs by caring for oneself and each other. These grace and courtesy lessons will include proper handwashing; coughing and sneezing etiquette; reminders to avoid touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth; and using cloth face coverings.
- We will discourage handshaking, high-fiving and hugging. When a student's well-being demands close physical contact from a faculty member (e.g., administering first aid, providing a hug to a crying child, etc.), health and safety precautions will be taken, and both the student and faculty member will wash their hands after coming into contact with each other.
- We will reduce the number of materials in each classroom. Materials will be regularly cleaned and rotated, and those that can't easily be sanitized, will be removed.



Cleaning and Disinfecting

MMS will follow CDC's cleaning and disinfecting guidelines. Surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, such as materials, doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops, nap pads, desks, chairs, cubbies, and playground structures will be routinely cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected.

Increase Social Distancing

MMS will take density-limiting actions, focused primarily on creating independent student groups. Each group will operate independently from each other. The number of adults that will come into contact with any one group will also be minimized.

Group schedules will include plenty of outdoor play and lessons ensuring our students continue to receive the physical, social, and academic benefits of being outdoors, while also taking advantage of the lower risk of transmission from being outdoors. Group schedules will also be strategically designed to limit the number of physical spaces shared by any one group on campus.

In creating groups that are effective, both as learning communities and independently operating units, the following criteria are taken into consideration and vary by division:

- A group size we can safely and logistically manage, especially with updated social distancing and hygiene procedures.
- Grouping students who participate in our extended day programs (before and after school care) together by classroom, as after school staff will now be coming individually to a group, rather than having all the children congregate as one large group.
- Staggering lunches and recess times to limit the number of students using them at any time and allow for cleaning between groups.

To increase social distancing, we have invested in multiple structural and physical space modifications in various areas throughout campus. Some examples include:

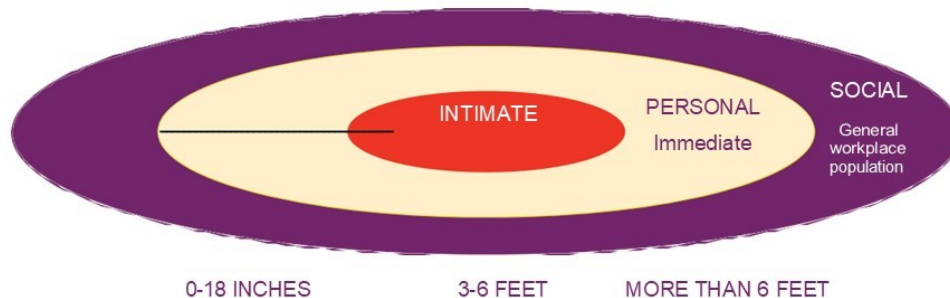
- Placing dividers on student work tables.
- Reducing the amount of furniture and materials in each classroom to create more space for students to remain physically distant.
- Providing doctor recommended air diffusers containing a solution of water and food-grade hydrogen peroxide for natural air sanitization.

MMS will also minimize opportunities for sustained exposure to any potential illness.

Operationally, this means we will:

- limit opportunities for groups of students to come together. We will not host school wide gatherings, group lunches, or other events that would bring people together in close physical space for sustained periods of time.
- update our drop off and pick up procedures to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible, in addition to limiting adults' ability to congregate during these times. We will also work to get students dropped off and picked up at a location that has direct entry to their group's classroom.
- utilize outdoor spaces whenever feasible.
- limit access to the building. Only students and adults who need to be on campus will be allowed in the buildings. Non-essential visitors, including parents, may not enter buildings without a prescheduled appointment and will be subject to the same pre-screening health requirements.

We know that, unlike older children and adults, young children cannot be expected to remain six feet apart from each other and staff. Our classrooms will work through the measures set out above: avoiding contact with those who have symptoms, frequent hand washing and good respiratory hygiene practices, regular cleaning of settings, and minimizing contact and mixing. Where settings can keep children in small groups 3-6 feet away from each other, teachers will do so.



Monitor Student and Staff Health

As a supplement to our current Health Policy in our Parent Handbook, we will establish and enforce a sick policy to support disease suppression. MMS will follow the CDC's [Considerations for Schools](#).

- Employees and students must stay home under the following conditions:
 - If they have tested positive for or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Please immediately notify the school for next steps.
 - If they have had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.
 - Please immediately notify the school for next steps.
 - If they have had a fever in the last 72 hours (over 100°).
 - If they have had any ill symptoms in the last 72 hours; including, but not limited to:
 - Cough, fever, difficulty breathing, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, loss of taste and/or smell, chills, excessive fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.

When there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 within our school community (including faculty, staff, students, or household members), the Alachua County Health Department will be contacted for guidance. MMS will follow all CDC and health department protocols to send infected or exposed individuals home. The CDC recommends 14 days of quarantine after exposure based on the time it takes to develop illness if infected. MMS will follow all CDC and health department protocols to clean and disinfect or temporarily close any at-risk areas on campus. The health department will guide decisions regarding closure of a classroom or building.

We understand this supplemental sick policy will be difficult for students, families, and faculty to manage, and we will only succeed in suppressing the spread of COVID-19 in our community through partnership and accountability. Please immediately notify the school if someone in your household has tested positive for or is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Provide Education and Support

The CDC reminds us that “Schools, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure students have safe and healthy learning environments.” As such, we have prioritized proactive information dissemination and combating misinformation throughout the pandemic, and we will continue this best practice in preparation for the upcoming school year. MMS School will:



- Communicate to families about COVID-19 in preparation for reopening.
- Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms, etc.) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs.
- Provide information to students, families, and faculty on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
- Include messages about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families, such as information provided on this website, in our emails, and on our social media accounts.
- Provide education and training on COVID-19 strategies for faculty and staff.

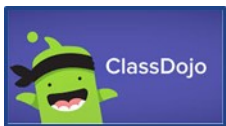
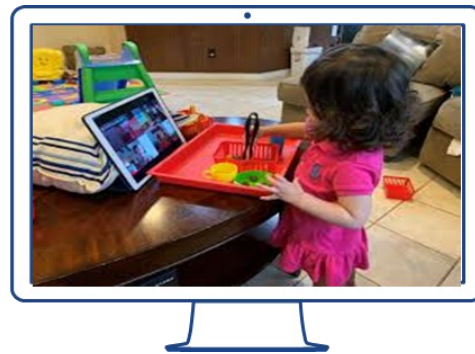
As a community, we have a shared responsibility to prevent the spread of illness. It is imperative that we all understand and adhere to these new policies and protocols, and remain committed to those listed here and in future communications to help keep students, staff, faculty, and families safe. Before school begins in August, we will provide copies of our full procedures for both school employees and enrolled families. This plan invests heavily in a robust set of stringent health and safety measures but is also adaptable to the changing conditions of the pandemic while still providing for the continuous education of our students. As conditions and guidelines from the CDC and Florida Department of Health continue to evolve and change while we are preparing for the 2020-2021 school year, we will monitor and update our plans accordingly, and provide new copies of the procedures for school employees and enrolled families to sign before the first day of school on Monday, August 17th. We ask that you remain flexible to this fluid situation.

MMS will also provide resilience and support services before and during the school year. We have already begun preparing for students' transition back to in-person learning and will focus heavily on reintegration back to the classroom in ways that support their cognitive, social, physical, and emotional well-being. Whether your child will return to their same classroom or enter a different classroom this fall, rest assured that we will be able to meet them where they are and go from there. Highly personal, individualized learning is what we do best. We will also provide training and support services for faculty and staff throughout the summer and school year.

Digital Platforms

To ensure that students have equal access to the curriculum whether they attend class remotely or onsite, we will enhance technology in every classroom to provide students with:

- A bridge between the physical and remote learning environment.
- Cloud-based online software to support interactive lesson delivery and collaborative workspace.
- State-of-the-art video technology to enhance the instructional experience regardless of location.
- Student access from any web-enabled computer, tablet, or phone.



For students in Early Childhood, Class DoJo is the platform for parent engagement and communication, student growth and progress, and uploading students documentation of their work (pictures and videos).



For students in Lower Elementary, Seesaw is the platform for parent engagement and communication, student growth and progress, and uploading students documentation of their work (pictures and videos). Seesaw offers interactive lessons on various subjects.



GSuite for Education is our school's communication and collaboration tools for learning anywhere, anytime, and on any device for 4th - 8th grades.



Jupiter iO is a Learning Management System (LMS) and Student Information System (SIS) for 1st - 8th grades. Parents and students can access grades, calendars, announcements, course content, and more.



Zoom is a video communications platform that is used schoolwide to provide a LIVE (synchronous) learning environment, and increase student participation and learning retention in virtual and hybrid classroom scenarios.



Millhopper Montessori School's Mobile Communications App is available to download to your iPhone, Android or iPad. The App will keep you updated on announcements and news. Search for: BB District by Blackboard, download and then search for Millhopper Montessori School. **Available: AUGUST 17, 2020**



Millhopper Tech is the school's Technology website for Preschool - 5th grades. It has several educational resources for students by subject and grade. Students in 4th & 5th utilize several interactive online textbooks for Science, Math and History.



M3S Roxx is the Middle School's Technology website. It has several educational resources for students by subject and grade. Middle School students use several interactive online platforms such as Pearson, Sr. Wooly, History Alive and more. All students receive their own laptop at the start of 6th grade.

School Subscriptions

Located at www.millhoppertech.com or www.m3sroxx.com under the Research and Reference tab, Millhopper Montessori School offers several paid subscriptions for use at school and at home. These educational platforms offer safe, engaging and interactive lessons on various subjects with a login and password. Starting in Kindergarten, students begin to research online using age appropriate databases. Please note: The login and password are to be used if the student does not have an individual account login.



Special Thanks

MMS is extremely thankful for the spirit of cooperation from peer schools and institutions in its effort to identify best practices for the safe return of students, staff, and faculty to the school in August.

Special thanks to Dr. Angeli Maun Akey, MD, FACP, AIHM/ABOIM, ABAARM, the Medical Director for North Florida Integrated Medicine. Her book, co-written with a colleague, Kathleen O'Neil-Smith, M.D., "Kick COVID-19 To The Curb," was published this month as an e-book and audio book.

Dr. Akey developed the Drive-Up Evaluations protocol now being used locally and nationally. She started her first weekly virtual town hall webinar on March 20 to help alleviate some of the anxiety and misinformation surrounding COVID-19. She has completed 15 webinars to date and says she will continue until the end of the pandemic.